DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BLOGGERS ROUNDTABLE WITH LEONARD WONG, RESEARCH PROFESSOR, ARMY WAR COLLEGE; STEPHEN GERRAS, PROFESSOR OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES, ARMY WAR COLLEGE MODERATOR: LINDY KYZER, ARMY PUBLIC AFFAIRS TIME: 1:30 P.M. EST DATE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2010



(Note: Please refer to www.dod.mil for more information.)

MR. WONG: (In progress) -- command leaders have been management -- (inaudible) -- but what we'd like to talk to you about today is the effects of multiple deployments on Army veterans.

Now, where does it start? Well, you know, it started -- (audio break) -- last night -- as you heard President Obama during the State of the Union that First Lady Obama was going to start devoting a lot of time and almost $9 billion on military family issues. We also see the things from a lot of activity, things like flat daddies replacing soldiers missing at the dinner table to senior Army leaders ceremoniously signing the Army family covenants -- (inaudible) -- throughout the United States. So we see a lot of activity pointed at Army families, military families, but then the question becomes what's the research showing on this. Well, that's a good question because when you look at the research, a lot of the past research is not that much research done on Army families and the affects of deployment on Army families, but a lot of the past research has been saying, okay, we think it produces stress and anxiety.

Can we prove that deployments produce stress and anxiety in Army families because of the war? And then they try to say how does that measure up to society because then we could prove that Army families or Army kids are being more stressed of the war. That's an interesting finding, to which we look at it and say, do Army kids experience more stress than average kids because of the war? And we say to ourselves, I think so -- (audio break) -- move on because what's -- (inaudible) -- particular stress, why don't we ask ourselves what affects the level of stress that Army kids experience during deployments?

When we talk about stress during a deployment, we're talking about anxiety. We're talking about worry. We're talking about having trouble sleeping at night -- I feel nervous, I have troubling thoughts. So we're talking about that kind of thing during a deployment.

And so what we said was what factors can influence the amount of stress experienced by a Army adolescent -- we're talking adolescents, 11 (year-olds) to 17-year-olds during a deployment. And so if I had to ask you that, what would be one of the factors that you would suggest?

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. WONG: Thank you, Carol. What --

Q A parent's gone.

MR. WONG: What's that?

Q A parent is gone.

MR. WONG: Well, yeah. During a deployment, what would affect the level of stress a child says they experience? Go ahead.

Q Mental health of the non-deployed.

MR. WONG: That's a very common finding of past ones. How the spouse, the non-deployed spouse, how they react to deployment affects the stress of the children. We said that. We also say, you know, we think there's a cumulative effect -- that, you know, with each deployment we think it sinks a little deeper and makes it a little harder. And so what we did is we came up with six factors that we said we believe influences the amount of stress that a child experiences when their soldier deploys to war. We said the number of deployments, the cumulative amount of deployments, we said the second deployment is going to be harder than the first; the third is going to be harder than the second.

Strong families. We said, you know, if you come from a strong family, it's going to reduce the amount of stress the child experiences. We said supportive mentors, the ability to talk to go talk to somebody about problems. That can include teachers, coaches, relatives, friends, people at the chapel/place of worship. We thought set activities, keeping the child distracted from the negative thoughts concerning a deployment, would help reduce the level of stress or it could raise if they don't have that much.

Communication with the deployed soldier. We're talking about the frequency -- more communication -- might reduce the stress, and the depth, deeper communications.

Finally, we said the personal beliefs held by the child would affect the level of stress that they experience when their soldier deploys.

So we took this and said let's create an online survey. Let's invite soldiers to fill out the online survey. So we sent out invitations -- the way we identified soldiers to receive this survey is we took the database that looked at all the children and we said any soldier that has a child who is between 11 and 17, let's take their name here and we take another personnel database and said give us all the

soldiers at Army posts greater than 5,000 because we want to look at posts, we didn't want to look at tiny, little posts, we want to look at programs on a post. And so we cross-referenced those and came out with -- (audio break).

So that concludes -- no, just kidding -- (laughter) -- so what we did is we sent that out and we invited them to take part in an online survey and out of that online survey, what we had was we had 2,006 soldiers respond. That's a great number to conduct analysis. But the question is it a representative number; in other words, is it a random sample that we got? Because if we got all respondents from Fort Hood and none from Fort Drum, that's not a good sample.

So what we did is we looked across the posts and we said, you know, it represents every post exactly as each post is represented -- (audio break) -- by population; Fort Hood is 26 percent and we got about 24 percent coming from Fort Hood. So that looks perfect.

We looked at rank. Just like every Army survey, we saw it was underrepresented in the lower enlisted. And what we're looking for is it over-represented the officers; it was a little higher, but it wasn't massively over-represented. What we saw is a lot of E-7 sergeant first classes through E-9, a lot in there. So that was good because what we're seeing is that our sample -- we weren't way on the officer range. That was our big concern. So let's take a look at some other things. Our population -- (audio break) -- Forces Command the United States, okay, 90 percent are male; in our sample, 91 percent are male -- (audio break) -- forces command, 87 percent have some kind of deployment experience; ours is 90.5 (percent) in our sample. In this online survey, 95.5 percent have some kind of deployment experience.

Now, why was ours higher? Because when you send out an e-mail inviting someone to take part in a survey called the "The Effects of Deployment on Army Adolescents -- (audio break) -- who were deployeed had a tendency to fill it out. So that's the reason.

Well, let's look at some other representativeness. Let's look at demographics. This is the Army demographics, 62 percent white; 19 percent black. Our sample out of 2,006 soldiers picked up -- (audio break) -- are white, 18 percent black. Now, the interesting thing, this Asian right there -- when I first made this chart, I called Steve up and I said, for some reason, 62 percent, 18.4 percent and 15 percent Asian. And I cannot explain why 15 percent of our population, our sample is Asian. And the only thing I could think of is they got an e-mail from some guy named Wong and every Asian filled it out. It could be that or it could be you had the decimal point off one -- (laughter) -- you should put it back out at 1.5 percent.

So this is a -- but you can see demographically, racially, it looks very much like the population.

So we looked at our sample and said this is a good enough sample, now, we can start conducting analysis on it. Well, what did we find? This is what we hypothesized. These six factors would alter the

level of stress a child experiences, 36.4 percent of the 2,006 soldiers were deployed at the time they received the online survey, 36.4 percent, which is really nice. And it now allows us to say deployed kids, what affects the level of stress? Okay. The way we measured stress, we had 14 questions or items that we took out of psychological scales -- look at a monagrah, we give the name -- (inaudible).

The way we measured those is we asked other questions. So what we didn't ask was how does your communication affect your stress? We didn't ask it that way. We measured their stress and then we measured their communication and then we looked for a relationship between the two.

So what did we find when we talked to the soldiers, when we got the soldiers' perspective on this? It reinforced everything we thought. For example, this was one of our big hypotheses that the number of previous deployments since 9/11 influenced the stress a child feels. We took those 14 questions to measure stress and turned them into a standardized score with an average of zero. Higher numbers mean more stress; lower numbers mean lower stress. This is the average line right here. The percentages are right here. So 22 percent of our sample had one deployment under their belt, 39 (percent) had two and 27 percent had three. If you have questions, just stop and please ask the question.

Okay, (Greg ?)

Q Aren't there other factors that make online surveys a problem besides whether they just happen to represent the category they're in. (Inaudible) -- if they're self-selected, isn't that going to skew the results?

MR. WONG: Yes. Because, I mean, if you take that into consideration, you know what, if soldiers don't want anything to do with the Army, they probably won't fill this out; in other words, your very disgruntled won't -- we didn't have a lot of senior officers because they're too busy. So --

Q But if it's somebody has the issues at hand and they want to voice their opinion --

MR. WONG: Then we're hoping. Right. Now, the way we did it is we preceded our invitation with an e-mail from the commanding general, the four star, that you're going to get an e-mail from the War College. I encourage you to participate in this. We had to make sure he didn't encourage encourage because you then get command influence. So he said I encourage you take to take part in it and we're not afraid to hear what you have to say. So we tried to grease the skids that way. And what we felt good was that -- (audio break) -- saw a nice distribution, that it wasn't a group of people that said, oh, it's all the happy people at that place -- someplace. So --

Q And what was the reason you didn't do a traditional command survey?

(Cross talk.)

MR. WONG: So every single person in the force command, 80 percent of the Army who had their kids between 11 and 17 received an e-mail. And so it wasn't like let's pick everyone who ends with a Social Security number of 3 and then we'll shrink it, no, we said, you know what, electronically, we could send to everyone. So we did.

Q They're still selecting themselves to participate --

MR. WONG: Exactly right.

Q -- as opposed to you going out and --

MR. WONG: We couldn't force them. Right. You'll see in a while where we're going with this that we had to work with Fort Detrick with human protections and they said you will not. You have to guard against forcing people to take part in this. MR. GERRAS: And that's why it's so important that we went across every demographic we could think of to see if our respondents looked like the FORCECOM population or the target population and it lines up pretty nicely except for the lower enlisted ranks, E-1 through E-4, is lower than we would have had hoped for, lower than we would've expected across the other ranks.

So that's why it was so important that we went across every demographic we could think of to see if our respondents looked like the FORCECOM population or the target population. And it lines up pretty nicely except for the lower enlisted ranks, E-1 through E-4. It's lower than we would have hoped for, lower than we would have expected across the other ranks.

MR. WONG: Yeah. When we talk to Army Research Institute, they say you should expect that with a survey.

Q But are they less likely to have children --

MR. GERRAS: That's another reason -- well, they're less likely to have three children than -- they wouldn't have gotten an e-mail if they didn't have any. It only went to military soldiers who had somebody in the (1117 ?).

MR. WONG: But they probably only had one, just like you said; an E-7 to E-9, probably has two or three. E-7 to E-9 probably has more access to the e-mail, the official Army e-mail system, than an E-1 to E-4. And so all those reasons, we think, led to higher ratings, besides the fact that lower ranking usually don't fill them out anyway.

Did I answer your question, right? I didn't solve your question, but I think I tried to answer it.

So, number of previous deployments. What we were expecting is that the more deployments a soldier has experienced, the more likely that their perception of the child stress would be higher. So, what did we find? Well, this is what we found, exactly what we hypothesized. That

the more deployments a soldier says they have, the higher their perception that their child is undergoing stress during deployment.

Right now you should be thinking to yourself, yeah, but this really isn't fair, because you're asking me -- (audio break) -- soldier for their perceptions. Exactly right, because what we did is we gave the online survey to 2,006 soldiers, but in that e-mail we said, and if you could, here's a link to an identical survey that you could pass on to your spouse. So we had 718 spouses also fill out the survey.

And then we said, and here are four links that, if you could, if you have children between the ages of 11 to 17, give this to them and have them fill out an identical version of the survey. So we picked up 559 adolescents and filled out the survey. (Inaudible) -- that there's 269 soldier, spouse and adolescent from the same family that filled out the survey that are connected with a common-user ID.

Because, see, this was the first phase of the study. The second phase of the study, we visited eight Army installations and conducted over 100 individual interviews of kids between 11 and 10. (If you want spend an interesting time, do this ?). And so we sat down for about half an hour, recorded interviews following up on what we learned in the online study. So in other words -- (inaudible) -- the online part, we went out and we did interviews. Now we have to say, hey, what do you think about exactly what we heard?

Well, when we did the interviews, what was interesting, we'd start off saying, okay, who's in the Army, your mother or your father? Okay, my father is. Well, how many times since 9/11 has he been deployed? And their most common answer we received was, "I don't know." Wait a minute, we're testing (those people ?) on this cumulative effect of deployments, and you don't even know?

And then when you think about it, it's not unreasonable for a 12- year-old boy to not know what he was doing eight years ago. And it's not unreasonable to ask a 13-year-old girl -- you say, okay, your mom's deployed right now; is she in Iraq or Afghanistan? And they would say, "I don't know."

And so taking that approach, the survey part, if you want to know how many times a soldier's been deployed since 9/11, you should ask the soldier. If you want to know how the child is doing during deployment, don't ask the soldier, or, like a lot of studies have been done in the past, ask the spouse. If you want to know how the child is doing, ask the child. If you want to know how a non-deployed spouse does during a deployment, ask the spouse. We take that approach and we continue on with our analysis.

For example, this is what the soldiers told us. Now, instead of the soldier's perception of child stress, we're going to take those same 14 questions, give them to the kids, and saying I feel nervous, strongly agree, somewhat disagree; I have troubled thoughts, strongly agree. So now -- (inaudible) -- on the kids. (Inaudible) -- spouses or the soldiers or the children. Okay? What did the children tell us? What

did the children -- remember, that's what we predicted, that's what soldiers told us. What did the children tell us? If you want to affect the child's stress level during deployment -- (inaudible) -- strong families, activities, personal beliefs. (Inaudible.)

So let's take a look at what exactly -- why things changed. For example, let's look at the frequency of communication. We thought the more an adolescent speaks to the deployed soldier, the less their stress level would be. And so we asked them how often do you speak to your deployed soldier, from never all the way to every day. This is the child's perspective, now, of the stress, not the parents' perspective of their stress. The child's perspective of the stress -- again, average was zero. Higher is higher stress, lower is lower stress. And what do we see? Well, we see that the more often they talk to their soldier, the higher their stress. Opposite of what we thought.

Now, why is this? Well, we got to be careful about causality, because we're not saying something causes something; it's associated with it. So what we're discovering is that the more they talk to the soldier while deployed, it's associated with higher stress.

Now, why could that be? Well, it could be kids who are more stressed talk to their parents more. You can't interpret it incorrectly. You don't also want to interpret this thing, well, you know what we need to do to reduce the stress level of kids? Cut e- mail. You don't want to do it that way. And so it's very complex. And that's one of the themes in this study, is, you know what? We might be simplistically thinking about this whole topic. It's complex. You come from a good family, a strong family, this isn't true. Okay? So we start seeing interactions.

Well, let's move on to the hypothesis that we had, was of of the big hypotheses, and that is, is there a cumulative effect of deployments? And so now if we want to know the number of previous deployments, we're going to rely on the soldiers, because that's about a hundred percent correct, right? But let's look at the child's stress levels instead of looking at it from the adult's perspective. If you remember, from the adult's perspective, we saw that clear relationship. Okay? What are the children saying? Throw out 4 and 5, throw out "none," because those are outliers. Where does that leave us? With each new deployment, the child's stress level actually goes down. How could that be?

Think about it, it makes sense. Because what happens is, during this time, they experience a level of stress. What happens on the second time their parent gets deployed? Well, they learn. They mature. They cope the first time, and then when the second time comes around, they've already learned how to deal with it. Then the third time rolls around, and you know what? It's even better.

And so what we discover is, for kids who are deployed, the cumulative effect -- (inaudible) -- doesn't kick in. There is no raising of the stress levels.

Oh, let me explain -- one of the answers -- the size of the bubble indicates how many people are in that category. So I'm trying to communicate more information that way. The value of this bubble is dead center.

Okay, what were your two questions? Did I reduce one of them?

Q No. This chart represents only those families where the soldier is currently deployed?

MR. WONG: Exactly right.

Q Why would you -- you don't have the entire universe looking at the previous deployment?

MR. WONG: No. We wanted to get there -- see, in another words, I'm asking the question, "Do you feel nervous?" I want to know if the kids whose parent's currently deployed -- I'm comparing them and then seeing what affects that.

Q Okay.

MR. WONG: Okay? What was your second question?

Q I'm curious why you would throw out -- (inaudible).

MR. WONG: It's such small numbers. You can't generalize.

MR. GERRAS: It's only 1 or 2 percent of the respondents fit in those categories. But what that does do is it (leads to ?) not a significant result.

Q So you can't say that the more deployments, the less the stress.

MR. WONG: Yeah.

MR. GERRAS: What I can say is there's no relationship -- (inaudible).

MR. WONG: I'm saying there is no evidence of a cumulative effect. I'm not saying it goes down. I'm not saying literally it goes down. I'm saying these are essentially statistically the same.

Does that make sense? The averages aren't different enough to say it goes down.

MR. GERRAS: With the soldier's perspective, it was statistically significant that the stress goes up per deployment. With the kids, there's no relationship. As you look at the chart, you would say, well, the major groups, one, two and three, which is where most of our soldiers are at this point, it is going down.

MR. WONG: You see a trend. But statistically what is says is it doesn't go up.

Q Well, there was a Rand study recently -- (inaudible) -- opposite. MR. WONG: We'll get to that. If you can hold that - okay? Challenge -- (inaudible) -- tell me how this dovetails with the Rand study. We'll get to that. Okay? Because the Rand study also looked at other things.

Q I'd like to compare -- (inaudible.)

Q Why would you necessarily find the parent's view of the child's stress less credible than the child's view?

MR. GERRAS: I wouldn't say less credible. I'd say from a different perspective. In other words, if you --

Q (Inaudible) -- was that the stress goes down

MR. GERRAS: Child's stress. That's child's perspective stress.

Q Right. Okay. In the child's perspective.

MR. GERRAS: Child's perspective.

MR. WONG: This is the child stress index implied from the parents. Now this is from the child's perspective. And the child's answering these questions: I have trouble sleeping at night; I worry about what's going to happen; I worry about the future. So now, would I trust the child saying that, I have troubled thoughts, or would I trust the mom or the dad saying my child has troubled thoughts?

MR. GERRAS: In the case of that earlier chart, it was the deployed soldier talking about the stress of the kid who's back in Fort Hood, sitting in Iraq or Afghanistan, or she's sitting in Iraq or Afghanistan.

So what's probably more accurate assessment of the child stress -- (inaudible)?

Q And we haven't got -- we haven't got the spouse at home -- (inaudible).

MR. : True.

Q So just one clarification.

MR. WONG: Yes.

Q Is this children and soldiers currently?

MR. WONG: Yes, because we -- (inaudible) -- is have a pair, and so -- (inaudible) -- in others words, we -- (inaudible) -- all soldiers and their children --

Q Okay. So these are just the children.

MR. WONG: Right. What we did say is, we said, okay, every -- give me every soldier-parent pair you can find. From the soldier, I want number of deployments; from the kid, I want their stress levels.

Q Okay.

MR. : And 409 soldier parent-kid pairs -- and of that, about a third we're deployed at the time, so it comes out to -- (word inaudible) -- the 146. So that's all the deployed --

MR. WONG: That's 146 kids with a parent. Yeah, because we couldn't just take kids, because we wanted to look at their parents for the -- certain data. You see that? What we're doing is, we're saying, give me the right information from the right person. Okay?

Let's move onto another one. Because we thought, maybe there's something kicking in about -- (word inaudible) -- because as you get older -- that's why deployments look like they're not as bothersome on the second and third, because that's the older kids. So what we looked at is the stress, the child stress, from age 11 to 17. Let's first look at kids who are not deployed. Okay? So now I took the sample of the -- of the two-thirds that weren't deployed and said, what's their average stress? Okay? And this is what we got. What we got is a graph showing the stress of growing up. These are the idyllic 11, preteen years. This is the age of acne, relationships, hormones, and this is 17-year-olds -- okay? -- struggling to become adults.

So then the question becomes, okay, those are non-deployed kids. We have the other half of the sample, third of the sample that they're deployed. What do they feel, as far as stress by age?

What we thought was, is that, okay, it'd be higher, but it would just parallel this. What we found was, it looks like this: If it is higher -- (inaudible) -- ages 14, 15 and 16, kids who have a parent deployed, is actually reporting less stress than the kids who were deployed. The kids whose -- of parents who -- is deployed were reporting less stress than a parent who is not deployed.

Now -- (inaudible) -- back up at 17. Well, we look at this and say, well, this makes sense over here, because these kids miss their parents. But what's going on for 14, 15 and 16? Well, you know, you have the interviews and you start hearing things and start raising your eyebrows and saying, okay, I start to get it: Because you start getting 14-, 15- and 16-year-olds saying, well, you know, I hate to admit it, but my dad's a disciplinarian, and when he leaves, life gets better, because my mom can't watch us all, and so things loosen up. This is the time that kids start getting independence. They want to start breaking away, and they want their space. These kids are reporting less stress.

Now, why would 17-year-olds go up? (Inaudible.) (Because ?) a lot of 17-year-olds who say to us, it didn't bother me before, but for some reason, it really bugs me now that they're going to miss my graduation; they're missing my senior year of sports; they're missing my

job search process or they're missing my college application process. That really bugs me. And we see the 17-year-olds' stress levels go back up. So we didn't see a clear delineation -- (inaudible) -- that older kids have more problems. We didn't see that.

Let's look at this. We said it was strong families. There are a -- of the number of the -- that we saw strong families, a number of activities -- participation in activities, and then personal beliefs. This is looking at participation in activities, specifically sports. When we looked at it for activities, we looked at things that might distract the child from the negative aspects of a deployment. We said sports; we said organizations such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts; and we said clubs such as band or drama. In this case, how often do you participate in sports teams, which the child answered "never" to "very often," is there a stress level there? And what we see is a nice line going here, and then the -- (inaudible) -- way up there.

Now, this is an odd bump, because their stress levels are definitely lower, significantly lower when they are -- participate in sports a lot, but we have this little odd thing out there: About a third of the respondents reported still higher than here, but lower than the rarely. Okay? And that sort of threw us off. We saw the same pattern with the organizations and the same pattern with the clubs. And we thought, who are these kids that they never do any of this stuff but they're still lower stress than the rarely but they're still higher stress than the people who do?

Well, we -- (inaudible) -- this up in the interviews. The middle-aged guys who designed the survey forgot to put an activity on there that a lot of kids do that distracts themselves from the deployment. That's video games. So -- and so this -- we had (to guess ?) there's a lot of gamers in here with higher stress and yet lower than kids who don't do -- (inaudible). So there we started learning that, you know what, we're a little old -- (inaudible).

This is going back to the families, then. So generally speaking, I've described my family as a strong, happy family. That's the soldier speaking -- the soldier speaking. But here we have the child stress levels over there. What do we see? What we see is stronger families have significantly lower stress levels.

So we have strong families, activities and then personal beliefs. This is the personal belief of the child. The child's saying, agree or disagree with this statement: The American public supports the war. And what we saw is not as steep a relationship, but a significant relationship. The more the child agrees with this statement, the lower their stress levels.

So folks, so far we've been talking about taking in a concept like personal beliefs -- American public supports the war -- and contrasting it with their stress levels. That's a bivariate analysis. We look at two things at one time, make a nice graph out of it.

But that doesn't help us when you try and say, okay, so what's the -- what's the biggest predictor of how a child is going to do during a deployment? Show me each pair -- which one's bigger? Well, then you shift to multivariate analysis, or multiple regression. And what we do there is, we put them all in a bucket and say, you know what, we're going to try to predict the level of stress the child experiences.

What's the biggest influence? Well, we'll never be able to solve it all, okay? But if we had to pick the biggest one, the one that accounts for the most variance in the child's stress level, it's their participation in activities, specifically sports -- (audio break) -- distracted, get their mind off, keep them busy. And then the next largest is, you need a strong family. And then the next largest after that is, they should believe the American public supports the war.

(So what we ?) looked at was, how does an individual child deal with an individual deployment? And we said, biggest raiser of their stress level is their participation in activity, specifically sports; then, if you have a strong family; and then, finally, what does the child believe? Do they believe the American public supports the war? And this will determine where their stress level is.

So what we've been doing is looking at one deployment, how a child deals with one deployment -- because there's another question, and it's related, but it's different -- and that is: So overall, how do you -- how do you handle this life as an Army brat? How do you handle, not one deployment: How do you handle a life of deployments? This is your life. How are you coping with this?

Well, what we thought was, instead of looking at a child's stress during deployment, we wanted to look at their ability to cope, their ability to handle deployments overall. And we thought the same six factors would influence this.

The nice thing is that this question has already been asked. The question's already been asked. Well, this is what we found. I'm going to show you right now -- is that, you know what it comes down to? Two factors: strong families and personal beliefs. (Inaudible) -- the ability to -- to deal with a life of deployments, the ability to cope with a life of deployments, ability to handle the life of an Army brat.

But this question's already been asked. It's been asked -- well, if you go back to the Survey of Army Families done in 2005, they asked a question: In general, how does -- (inaudible) -- child, between 11 and 17, cope with your spouse being deployed and away from home? Here they're asking spouses, okay? Forty-nine percent in 2005 said, my child is doing well or very well, which really led to 20 percent saying poorly or very poorly.

DOD conducted a study -- this is about 1,300 spouses answered this one -- DOD did a study in 2008 asking the same question. (Inaudible) -- how well does your child cope with your spouse's deployment. They said 49 percent -- spouses again -- 49 percent said their child was doing

well or very well, 26 percent said poorly or very poorly. We asked the same question. We asked spouses.

Now, if we did a good job on creating a survey, we did a good job of getting a good sample, what should we find? (Pause.)

Q (Off mike.)

MR. WONG: I'm asking you.

Q (Off mike.)

MR. WONG: Oh, yeah. If I ask spouses -- if I asked spouses in our sample the same question, what should I find? Well, hopefully I'd find --

Q Similar? MR. WONG: -- the very same answer. And the answer was, I found 45 percent said their child was doing well or very well, and 27 percent said their child was doing poorly or very poorly, which says our survey is either as messed up or as good as those surveys they used in the past. Okay? Our sample is either as messed up or as good as the ones in the past. That gives us great confidence (in ?), you know, we don't have -- (inaudible) -- thing here, that we just winged it. It's got some validity there.

But see, what we did is, we just didn't have spouses like most other studies do. We also asked soldiers, how is your child doing? Okay? And what do you think soldiers said? Spouses say about 49, 45 percent are doing well.

About 27 -- (inaudible) --

(Cross talk.)

MR. : (Inaudible) -- percent.

MR. WONG (?): More pessimistic or more optimistic? Well, guess what. Thirty-six percent -- (their ?) children doing well or very well. Thirty-three percent said poorly or very -- (audio break).

Why would soldiers be more pessimistic about how their children are coping with a life of deployments?

Q Guilt.

Q Guilt.

MR. WONG (?): Guilt. Guilt. Because who's the reason that this whole situation exists?

Q Me.

MR. WONG (?): Okay. And guess what. If they're doing well without you, what does that sort of say about you? Okay. No one want to

say, ("Well, the kid's ?) doing fine without me." And so that's what we -- now -- but we -- we moved on, because we just didn't ask the spouse, we just didn't ask the soldier, but we also asked the child. Now is the child more optimistic or the child -- or the children more pessimistic than the parents? What do you think?

We thought they would be more pessimistic. What the data shows is that they were more optimistic. Fifty-six percent of the children reported that they're doing well or very well. Seventeen percent said they're doing poorly or very poorly.

Before we look at this 56 percent, we have to look at the 17 percent. That percent of children of children between the ages of 11 and 17 say not that they're doing okay but that they're doing poorly or very poorly with deployments. That equates to about 20,000 11-to- 17-year-olds across the active Army say they're doing poorly or very poorly -- (inaudible). That's not a good situation. Even though it's 17 percent, and we start saying, "Wow, it's really" -- no, it's 20,000 kids between 11 and 17 across the active Army. And yet we're surprised to see that 56 percent of the kids say they're doing not okay but well or very well, overall, with deployments. That surprised us. We were really expecting that (it could be ?) worse, because we're expecting a cumulative effect, we thought we were getting ready to (break ?) the Army, and here these kids bounce back and say no, 56 percent of them said well or very well.

Well, let's look at those factors that influenced their perception of how they're doing. Remember, we said it was strong families, and we said it was personal beliefs.

Let's look at strong families. Now instead of child stress index (during ?) -- (and this is for ?) deployments -- we're now looking at the child's ability to cope with deployments. Now here's the soldier describing the family. "Strong family" is far right. "Disagree with that statement" is on the far left. And what we see is a clear relationship. The more they agree with the statement that they have a strong family, the more apt they are to say -- that the child is going to say that they can deal with a life of deployments. That's strong family.

Then here we have this question, "When my spouse is deployed" -- so this is now the non-deployed spouse answering the question -- "When my spouse is deployed, I handle it well." Child's perceptions over there. And what we see is a very nice relationship between a spouse saying that they handle it well when their soldier deploys and the child saying they can cope with a life of deployments.

Remember, it was the family, but then we also said it was personal beliefs. Let me jump back to this one. This is a comment from one of the child's -- when they said what's the biggest factor that affects your ability to cope: "Well, it's my mom, for everything she has gone through since my dad left. She has stayed strong (for us ?)."

We had another child -- put it a little more bluntly. He said: What's the biggest factor? Well, it's when the other parent doesn't act like a drama queen.

So this is where they're saying: This is the biggest factor for me, how the non-deployed spouse reacts.

But we also said it was personal beliefs. This is a personal belief that we measured, and it's deployed soldiers are making a difference in the world.

What's interesting is that we originally did not put this on the survey, but we did this survey in conjunction with Forces Command, and when we briefed the Forces Command commanding general, he said: Why don't you add one more on there? Ask how much they agree that their deployed soldiers make a difference. (We did ?), because he was a four-star general. And so we put this in here -- "strongly agree," "strongly disagree." What we see is a very clear relationship between their belief that deployed soldiers are making a difference in the world and their ability to cope with deployments.

Again, we're looking at bivariate analysis. Okay, (you finally show us a nice ?) graph, but put them all in -- (inaudible) -- prioritize, what are the significant factors that predict a child's ability to cope with a life of deployments? So what we do is -- again, you're not going to solve it all. There's always going to be questions. But if we had to pick the predictors that are significant in predicting how they cope with a life of deployments, what are they?

Well, let's not start with the biggest. Let's start with a significant but not the biggest. What you first need is you need a strong spouse. The next-largest is the child has to believe that America supports the war. We saw that on the dealing with the individual deployment.

The next-largest is strong family. That makes sense.

What surprised us: that the biggest predictor of a child's ability to cope with a life of deployments -- (inaudible) -- their belief that soldiers are making a difference in the world. We did not -- (we missed -- totally surprised us ?).

But what did we do in this study? Well, we looked at two things. We looked at what affects the level of stress a child experiences during an individual deployment, and we looked at how does a child cope with a life of deployments.

What did we find? We found that the stress experienced by an adolescent during an individual deployment is not associated with the number of previous deployments.

We also found that Army (adolescents ?) are more optimistic about how are they coping with deployments than their parents -- significant difference across both the spouse and the soldier perspective.

And when you talk about an individual deployment, we said if you want to influence the stress that a child experiences during an individual deployment, keep them busy in activities, specifically sports. You need to build strong families, and they need to believe that America supports the war.

But if you want to help them cope with a life of deployments, they need to believe that soldiers are making a difference. We need to have strong families, as we mentioned over there; they need to believe America supports the war; and we need a strong spouse -- (inaudible). Q This is beyond the scope, obviously, but did you get any sense of, you know, where these kids were -- would formulate ideas that if America is supporting the war --

MR. WONG (?): Yeah.

Q -- like (would that be ?) friends and school --

MR. WONG (?): Well, let me -- I'll touch on that in a second, okay?

And so what led us -- if you look at this, you say activities -- I think we could have predicted that. You know, that's easy to do. Keep them busy, you know -- (use ?) a lot of basketball programs, lot of sports, (lot of this ?) -- keep them busy.

Strong families -- well, that's not easy. That starts long before deployment begins. But we sort of knew that a strong family helps deflect the stress, helps them cope with a life of deployments.

But what pops out of this study is that -- you know what? The attitudes of Army adolescents are important predictors of deployment stress, the ability to cope with a life of deployments. (We so ?) often forget that the kids believe exactly what you're just saying -- where did the kids get this? Well, who are these kids, okay, and where do they get these beliefs from?

Well, I'm going to show the words of a 16-year-old daughter of a sergeant major. When you read the words, ask yourself, "Does she sound stressed? Do deployments stress her?"

But then ask yourself, "Is there something different about this child that lets her deal with a life of deployments?"

So what she says is, "My daddy always being gone makes me stress out the most. He's in charge of a lot of soldiers. He always has to do what they do, set the example, he says; don't ask a soldier to do something you can't or won't do. He gets scared that sometimes he will forget to be careful and he will get hurt. He's deployed so many time already, but he tell me not to worry. Somebody has to do the job and take care of the younger soldiers."

Then she says, "I just wish that sometimes he'd forget about soldiers and remember me and my sisters. We need him too. I just wish

the fighting would stop. Then he would be able to stay home with us. I love my daddy to death, but he will never give up on taking care of his soldiers."

Where does a child like this come from? You can see the multiple deployments (affected ?) there. You can see the stress that she experiences. But why doesn't she say she's doing poorly? Well, because this child probably grew up at a place called -- (inaudible). She probably goes to the movies on post, and she has to stand at the national anthem before the movie. She's probably heard her dad say something like "I know my soldiers, and I'll always place their needs before my own" -- (inaudible) -- or "I'll always place the mission first, out of the warrior ethos."

She's gone on post and she sees the (rocks ?) painted with our Army values. And she's gone to the yellow ribbon ceremonies, and she's gone to deployment ceremonies.

And so somehow all this wraps around this child and puts something in there that she understands that it's -- "my dad's gone for a reason."

During the interviews, I'd hear some kids -- they sit down and say -- and we'd go through the whole interview, and I'd say, "So are you doing okay with all this stuff?" And I'd sort of like goad them on and say, "That's like me going across the street and finding some kid whose dad's in jail for a year. Then he comes out on parole, and then he messes up and he goes back in for a year. Then he comes out on parole and goes back in for a year."

And I said -- and I would ask that kid, "How are you doing? " They would tell me, "Okay."

And the kids would look at me and say, "No, you don't understand. That kid's dad's gone because he did something wrong. My dad's gone because he's doing something right."

And so this generation of kids -- there's a lot of hurting kids out there, but there are a lot of kids out there, though, that have internalized the values of sacrifice, of selfless service, of duty. And they're not happy about their parents being gone, but they understand it, and that helps them to cope.

Well, it wasn't exactly 20 minutes, (but we came out ?) --

Q (Off mike) -- forgive me if I missed it, but did you show a slide that shows the spouse at home's rating of the stress of the children -- (inaudible) -- that the soldier doing it, that a child's doing it --

MR. WONG (?): No, we didn't show that -- the spouse.

Q What was it -- what was it there?

MR. GERRAS (?): We show the percentage is that 45 and -- (inaudible) -- coping -- (inaudible).

Q (Great ?). The stress part -- (but this change in stress levels in the multiple part there ?)?

MR. WONG (?): Let me think -- MR. GERRAS (?): I don't -- we don't have that handy right now.

Q Because wouldn't they -- they'd be the ones that actually (explain to ?) the child (what's happening ?). What did you base the determination of stress on?

MR. : Fourteen questions.

Q Was it the way they talked or their academic performance?

MR. : No.

Fourteen questions. Answering the question: I am nervous, I have trouble sleeping at night, I worry.

Q Right.

MR. : In other words, there are some psychological scales to measure general anxiety disorder and stress scales.

Q You didn't look at academic performance.

MR. : We looked at -- we looked at getting in trouble at school and we looked at behavioral problems. And we didn't find anything there enough to conduct analysis, because there wasn't -- (inaudible).

In other words, we looked at -- (inaudible) -- but not enough kids did it to say, why did some kids do it and why didn't some kids do it? There were too many that were in the none category.

Q But grades, you didn't --

MR. : No. No.

For the spouses assessing kid's stress, it's just a straight down line. (Inaudible.) For each deployment -- one, two, three four -- how many previous deployments -- the spouse assessment of the kid's stress has gone down, which is actually opposite again.

So they have a better feel for what's going on with the kid.

(Cross talk.)

It's more in line with what you saw in the child assessment of their stress, with number of deployments, than it is with the soldier.

Q Did you ask the kids if they were taking on more responsibility, a lot more responsibility? MR. : In the interviews, we got into that. But I can't show you a graph and I can't show you statistical support to say, it's because of this. But we heard a lot of maturing that, hey, I learned how to take care of more stuff than I normally would have. But that's anecdotal.

(Cross talk.)

Q Can I ask a quick question before you get to RAND?

MR. : Go ahead.

Q How did you determine strong family?

MR. : We asked the question, agree or strongly disagree with, I have a strong, happy family. Also there's stuff in there about, the bonds in my family are strong and things like that.

So what we didn't want to do is -- there's one technique to say, what percent of the kids think they have a strong family? We weren't looking for that. We said -- we asked --

(Cross talk.)

We asked instead, okay, agree or disagree with this one question: I have a strong family. We found people don't agree on that. Well, what makes a person agree with it and what makes a person disagree with it? We were more concerned about the relationship between the strong family and another variable.

So this is a RAND study, okay, came from a pediatrics journal article. And when you read the news reports about this -- you could read the actual report, or you could see what was reported in the news.

And you saw things like, new research by RAND shows that many military families already know this. When the parents hurt, so do the kids. And it's the cumulative effect of multiple deployments that really hits home. (Inaudible.)

That was the interpretation of the RAND or National Military Family Association. What did the actual report say? Well, what they did is, they didn't measure stress. They measured something called child deployment difficulties. Let's just call it -- equate it with our deployment stress, okay?

And what they did is, here's theirs. They have a child perspective that they measured. They measured a spouse perspective. This is our study here: child, spouse and soldier.

They measured the number of months deployed in the last three years, number of months deployed in the last three years. What they found was that it was significant from the spouse's perspective but not from the child's perspective. We didn't measure this okay? They also

measured the cumulative deployments in the last three years. And what they found there was, it was not significant. There was no difference in the child deployment difficulties.

We didn't measure that. We measured cumulative deployments since 9/11. And what we found was, remember, when the soldier said, it's a significant -- there's a significant cumulative difference there.

But from the child's perspective, this is what we said. There is nothing from the child's perspective. They also pointed out that age, gender and on post had an effect.

But when you look at who said it, they chose the spouse for this one, child's perception on this one and then back to the spouse on this one. And we didn't find it in any.

So when they say -- when you hear the interpretation, didn't the RAND study say there's a cumulative effect? Well, the RAND study said that from the spouse perspective, there's an effect of the number of months deployed in the last three years. (Inaudible.) Spouses say that an 11-month deployment is more stressful than a four-month deployment.

Did that clarify it or did that make it worse?

Q So it's just like bad reporting or --

MR. : No, I didn't say that.

I said, you have to look at the actual study, and it wasn't bad reporting. It was all true, right? But you just have to say, well, what really -- go deep into it.

And one of the things we did is, we said, what does the child think, first of all? And when you say cumulative, what do you really mean? Well, what they meant was the number of months deployed. Not the study -- that's what the interpretation said.

If you look at the study, it's very -- you know, a lot of articles, they just blurt it out.

Q You are saying it's bad reporting, because what you're saying is, they found no cumulative effect. And that's exactly what the reporting --

MR. : You could interpret it as this. But then you have to qualify it saying, well, when I say cumulative, I'm saying the number of months deployed in the last three years. And I'm talking about a spouse perspective.

I mean, I can't believe we're in here, and I'm defending the press. (Laughter.) Q Well, but I'm trying to make sure I understand this correctly.

(Cross talk.)

MR. : Now I'm telling you, this is what the real report says, okay? (Inaudible.) We interviewed children and the spouses. (Inaudible.) Both the kids and spouse -- when you read the study, it's actually just the spouse.

(Cross talk.)

I have the study here, if you want to see it.

MR. : They did robo-calls to kids applying to a camp. (Inaudible.)

Q How is that?

MR. : Well, I'm trying to get into a camp for deployed kids.

Q But I think the issue that you're confronted with is that if you do an online survey, then you have to go voluntarily. You don't know why they're doing that. They may have an agenda. They may --

MR. : Oh, wait a minute, the online survey. We gave them a user ID. In other words, you might have gotten on and filled it out. Is that what you're saying?

Q No, no, no, no, no.

MR. : Oh, okay.

Q I'm saying the parents you targeted, all the parents who have children --

MR. : Yes, yes.

Q Some of them participated, some of them didn't.

MR. : Right.

Q The ones who did participate, you don't why they're doing it. They may do it because, I want to show them that an Army family is strong.

MR. : Right.

Q So you'd have a skewed example of families that are strong. Or it may be the other way around. (Inaudible.) MR. : Okay, I agree.

Q How do you account for that?

MR. : How do you account for it?

Well, what you do is you say, did we get any variance in our kids? If we got all kids that say, I don't have any stress, I cope well, then we'd worry. But what we'd do is, we'd go in there and say, isn't this nice, we've got --

Q (Inaudible.) Saying the results are similar to other results?

MR. : No.

Even before we get to results, I look at, how did these kids answer the question, I feel stressed? If I get, everyone says, I don't, then I'd say, look at all these Pollyannas answering.

But if I get a normal curve -- in other words, I get a third that say I do feel stressed, I get a third that say I don't feel stressed and I get a bunch in the middle, then I'd say, that looks like a good question, because I started separating out the kids that are answering.

MR. : But it's not a problem unique to this study or any study, when you send out a survey or you do an online survey. You just have to compare your respondents with the target population that you're going to generalize to.

The one thing we do have that reinforces -- (inaudible) -- that coping slide that shows what the study of Army families did and the DOD study. And then our spouses are actually a little bit more pessimistic than the previous two studies.

It's not the Pollyanna crowd or something like that. Does that mean that we touched the entire continuum of possible families? Probably no.

(Cross talk.)

MR. : You're absolutely right. And that's the fatal flaw of inferential statistics, because we're inferring. We're saying, give us a sample, and we're going to infer from that.

Well, you can always say, what makes you think? You try to -- you try to guard for that as much as possible. But you can never nail that one down.

Q You don't think it's the flaw of online. MR. : No, not online, because what was nice about it, this wasn't like whoever wants to, you can go this website. No. We targeted specific people. And we gave them a unique user ID.

You couldn't get into our survey unless you were a unique user ID. And so then what that allows you to do is get parental permission, okay, because you couldn't have kids just jumping in, going to the PX and saying, hey, does anyone want to talk to me?

MR. : (Inaudible.) I tell him, hey, I got this great result.

(Cross talk.)

MR. : When you conscribe this to him say, how could they have done this better?

Q Yeah, but there's a big difference between an online survey on a website and receiving an e-mail with the survey.

MR. : Right.

Q I mean, it's the same thing as receiving a form in the mail saying, could you please fill out this survey? Whatever calculus you use to fill out the paper survey or respond to the e-mail one, the only thing you would probably argue is, it's a little bit easier to do the e-mail one. I just click on it, bump-bump-bump-bump-bump, and I'm done.

MR. : It wasn't open to the public.

Q As opposed to an Army Times survey that says, please answer this question. And you could clearly say, well, first of all the people that go to that website are self-selecting into it. And then the ones who are really interested in the topic are self-selecting into it.

I think it's a lot different than receiving the e-mail.

Q It's an online poll, then?

(Cross talk.)

MR. WONG: The people interpreted the survey.

Q Right.

MR. WONG: We did have the little trademark down at the bottom that said this is not a scientific survey.

Q Right.

MR. WONG: You know, ours was a scientific survey.

Q I don't know what -- how much this matters, but saw a reference in there to (AQ pods ?) or (APs ?).

MR. WONG: Yes.

Q Did you comment on that before you did the survey?

MR. WONG: Oh, of course not. What we did was, after they finished talking to us -- it had nothing to do with the survey.

Q Oh, okay.

MR. WONG: Nothing to do with the survey.

Q Okay.

MR. WONG: Those were interviews. This is kids -- (inaudible) -- took off his day. We started at 8:30 in the morning -- (inaudible) -- and they didn't look to have these kids. When they'd finished talking to them for about a half an hour, they reached down in their notebook -- or briefcase -- and said, "You like Burger King? Here's some Burger King coupons. Thanks for coming." And then they'd get a smile on their face, and then they'd leave. But there -- there was no enticements at all.

Yes. MR. : (Off mike.)

(Cross talk.)

MR. WONG: It's funny how that's still in. You're still reading it through. She meant -- now, listen to what she said. She wouldn't want -- (inaudible) -- perspective.

MR. : She -- (inaudible) -- has a separate category.

MR. WONG: Because she measured that, also. She measured number of deployments.

(Cross talk.)

Q Who's in charge of her -- (inaudible) -- article? There's no significance for any of these from this spot. I mean, you can't -- I think it's only from this -- (inaudible).

MS. KYZER: I think we're going to lose this on-line in the next 10 minutes. Is anybody on the line? (Inaudible) -- or Anne Levin (sp), do you have a question? (Pause.) Trying to give them a chance.

Q No, no questions now.

MS. KYZER: Thanks.

Q I want to be able to follow up later on.

MS. KYZER: Absolutely.

Q Thanks.

Q And we just want to compliment the survey researchers, as well as Ms. Kyzer, for an excellent job with that.

MR. WONG: That was my father. (Laughter.)

Q I don't know, a kind of basic question is, the Army has found that in wartime a soldier deployed affects stress levels. There is

an effect on children. And also, that the best way to cope for multiple deployments is for families with leave. Soldiers are making a difference. I'm going to tell my editor this -- (inaudible) -- of course the Army would -- (inaudible).

MR. WONG: Right. And so I want to get that first. Now, I'm not sure you guys will believe this, but we're not the Army. Okay? We're -- I'm a researcher at the Army War College. Believe it or not, we have academic freedom there. Okay? So -- (inaudible) -- is always getting mad at people on my floor because they're -- we travel and we think freely. I think some of the people around the table know that they can call me up, and I won't always give the party line. And I'd like to think of myself as an independent researcher. That's why we're at the Army War College. Okay?

But the way you put it is that, like, the best way is to believe this. We're not saying that. We're saying the best predictor -- that'll determine the causality. Show me kids that can cope well. I can predict them -- okay, not a hundred percent, but I can predict them, if I could see, "Do they believe this? Do they do this? Do they have strong family?", all this kind of stuff. So I'm not saying it causes it, but I'm saying I can predict it. All right?

So, yes, could I ever overcome your skepticism that I happen to work for the Army?

(Cross talk.)

MR. GERRAS: You know, the one thing I'd tell you, what we'd admit freely is that we -- you know, as researchers you're concerned about something called experimenter bias. So if you're a psychologist with four kids in day care and you're trying to research the impact of day care on kids, and you come out saying they're taller, smarter, faster, everything, you say, "Well, there might be some bias there."

Our bias going into it, which we discussed, was we thought there was going -- a problem. And we thought, boy, it's going to be difficult to really communicate this without being the two guys at the War College that said, "Hey, the Army kids are having a problem." So when these -- when the results came back and we looked at the data, we looked at each other and went, "Well, okay, we didn't expect this." And then we went out about two weeks later and started doing the interviews, and started to fill in the picture.

So to us, when we hear what we would anticipate as a -- as a -- as an overview of what we just presented, we kind of laugh because we thought, wait, our bias was the opposite. We thought we're going on a surge, and nobody's talking about what's happening with these kids. And we said we're going to go find this out.

MR. WONG: March 2009, we -- when we went to the force com commander, force command commander, and said, "Can we survey across your command?", you know, 80 percent of the Army -- the final slide was, "And whatever we come up with, you cannot stop us from saying, because we're

researchers and we're going to -- you can't -- you're not going to muzzle us if it's a bad news story." And he said, "You need to know." And we -- at that time, none of us knew what we were going to find.

MS. KYZER: Leonard, you might want to talk about how this was assigned to you.

MR. WONG: This wasn't assigned to us. MS. KYZER: Exactly.

MR. WONG: Okay. This was -- I mean, we're at the table now. I don't -- this is not my area. I'm not a family researcher guy, okay? I look at combat motivation, I look at personnel, I look at -- anything, okay? And so what happens was, we're at a conference and I heard someone giving a briefing on how kids were doing. And I said, "Well, how did -- how did you know how the kids were doing?" They said, "Oh, we got it from the spouses." Well, why doesn't anyone ask the kids?

We also had the bias that someone needs to show that the Army is having a rougher time of it that we really think. And so we literally came up with the analogy of something called an IM-93, the dosimiter. It measures radiation. Back in the Cold War days, everyone was supposed to be issued one of these IM-93, and it would measure how much radiation you got. We thought you needed an IM-93 for kids; that they -- you know, so many cumulative deployments, suddenly the indicator would say, "That's it, they've had enough." We had that analogy all ready to go, you know. (Chuckles.) And then here, all the data goes "whoomph" in our face, saying, you know, not what you thought.

Now, that still might not convince you, but try it on your editor and see what -- see what happens.

Q Well, just one other clarification. You said 20,000 kids.

MR. WONG: Yes.

Q Is that based on the sample of the 500-some that responded to you?

MR. WONG: That's 70 percent of the 11(-year-olds) to 17-year-olds in the active Army.

Q And you got that from the kids who responded to the survey?

MR. WONG: No. That's looking at the demographic tracks of the big Army -- of active Army.

MR. GERRAS: The 17 percent came from our sample.

MR. WONG: Right, 17 percent.

MR. GERRAS: And we extrapolated it out to the number of kids. And a couple of things to point out is, remember, we're looking at 11(-year-olds) to 17-year-olds. Most Army kids are younger than that. And

we're not generalizing results of this to that younger population at all. We clearly are also not saying that, even though these kids appear to be doing better than we thought, or much better than we thought, and coping better than at least their parents think they're coping, we don't know how they're going to be doing in 20 years. You know, we're talking about a cross-sectional study today of 11(-year- olds) to 17-year-olds that were pretty comparable to our inferential statistics -- (inaudible) -- talk about that we're describing it pretty accurately.

Q Do you have any sense of why there were not more kids who participated? How does that -- how many -- do you know what the universe was, of the 2,006?

MR. WONG: Thirty-four thousand, five hundred.

Q Well, in -- in --

MR. WONG: Even the -- (inaudible) -- like the soldiers.

Q Oh, okay.

MR. WONG: Yeah, 34,500. Now, why did only 2,006 respond?

Q But --

MR. WONG: Right.

Q -- even of those 2,006 --

MR. WONG: Exactly.

Q -- there were 559 -- (off mike).

MR. WONG: Right -- (inaudible) -- well, first it had to get to the soldier. Soldiers had to give permission.

Q Right.

MR. WONG: When you're working with kids, you want protections to kick in.

Q Right.

MR. WONG: So we were -- we were -- I tell you what. People in the Army are skeptical of surveys.

MR. : Lindy?

MR. WONG: And so we were very happy to get 559 kids, volunteers. The problem is that we were -- our whole system was done through AKO, Army Knowledge Online. And so a lot of people -- (off mike) -- and some of the forward operating bases in Iraq had barriers --

MR. : Lindy, War College, thank you all very much. We're about to be logged off. (Cross talk.)

MR. : -- we got e-mails saying the service guys still do it. And we're like, no, we're going down to the Pentagon and brief the press tomorrow. So that Army Knowledge Online was a big limiter. The total population of kids was -- (inaudible) -- percent.

MR. : No, no, no, I mean, across force com it was about 50,000.

MR. : Correct.

Q All right. Oh, okay. Okay.

Q And these 2,000 were what percent?

MR. WONG: The 2,000 soldiers, 5.8 percent of the population, which is not the greatest number. That's why it's very important to see, okay, 2,006 is a good enough number to do statistics on, but is it representative? And that's when we looked at post, rank, gender, deployment.

MR. : And we piloted this.

(END OF AVAILABLE AUDIO.)

END.